



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,  
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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Headmaster of Tonbridge School, on "Homes and Schools," at Christ Church Parish room, St. Leonards. The president of the meeting was W. Lucas Shadwell, Esq., M.P. for the borough.

WALLASEY.—Mrs. Miall gave a most instructive and delightful lecture on "Forgetting" to members of this Branch, on November 9th.—On December 2nd, Miss Sturge gave a very valuable address on "The place of imagination and poetry in Education," showing the good results each might bring if carefully developed.

BOLTON.—A branch has been formed here with eleven members. The first meeting was held on Nov. 29th, at Hetlands, Markland Hill, by kind permission of Mrs. Edward Crook. It was decided to read the books in the *Mother's Educational Course*, and to meet and discuss them.—It is hoped that Mrs. Steinthal will be able to come over in January for a lecture.—Mrs. Crook was elected president, and Mrs. Harold Barnes secretary.

GLASGOW.—The first meeting of the session was held at Redlands, on Nov. 18th, when Professor Young delivered an address on "Experience as a Teacher." The lecturer pointed out the risk of laying too much stress on individualism, and of attempting to form the world on *a priori* principles. "Experience" is not an experiment made by lad or lass, but a decision deliberately come to in face of certain circumstances. He contrasted Palmerston's view of childhood with Spencer's. After pointing out that unchecked permission to learn by experience is actually felt as *neglect* by the child, he dwelt on the need of real discipline. Experience is only valuable when suggested by thought, and made full by knowledge. The more education a mother has, the wider will be her sympathies, and the more likely will she be to save her children suffering. Trust in Spencer's theories of education involves the adoption of a wide area of experimental views based on a mechanical theory of the universe. To any one who holds that the universe is regulated by accident, experience is truly the only guide. He deprecated government by fear, as well as neglect to govern. We should not let children make their experience for themselves without aid. There should be proper discipline and implicit obedience. Some discussion followed. The lecturer took occasion still further to expose the Hedonism of Spencer, who makes morality a mere development of sense impressions, grouped somehow into complex judgments. He emphasized the fact that to young children the parent is the arbiter in place of conscience, and that they must, in Huxley's words, "Learn the meaning of the imperative ought." At the close Mr. Mirrlees, the chairman, moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer, which was cordially responded to.

NORTH FINCHLEY. Hon. Sec.: Mrs. Ramsay Wilson.—A meeting was held on 7th December for "Discussion" among members of Miss Mason's chapter on "Habit" from *Home Education*. The discussion was started by W. Blake Odgers, Esq., LL.D., Q.C. One lady and many gentleman speakers followed. This plan (a departure from our usual one) proved very successful. The next meeting will be held on February 3rd, when Dr. Shuttleworth has kindly promised to address the Branch. There have been 21 members enrolled for the "Reading Circle."

# THE PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE  
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

## AIMS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION.\*

BY PROFESSOR KIRKPATRICK.

THERE is a fine passage in Milton's Tractate of Education in which the poet conducts us to a lofty hillside, in order "to point out the right path of a noble and virtuous education . . . . . full of goodly prospect." Let this be our text. Let me try, although not an expert, to help you to find that right path. I propose to ask your attention to the aims and vital principles of Secondary Education, but without altogether excluding its methods and instruments. By Secondary Education I understand the education adapted for boys (to whom I shall chiefly confine my remarks) between the ages of about fourteen and eighteen; but we shall also glance at primary education on the one hand, and at the sequel to Secondary Education on the other.

Let us begin at the beginning, and say a word about primary education. It is generally agreed that during childhood (say, up to the age of twelve or thirteen) boys and girls are better ruled by love than by fear. They require to be moulded, led, and trained with patient and tender care, yet not without a firm observance of law and order. For by over-indulgence children are spoiled, which often means ruined for life; while by over-severity they are alienated and tempted to seek refuge in forbidden amusements and in tortuous ways. These are commonplaces which every

\* Opening address for 1897-98: Parents' National Educational Union (Edinburgh, 19th November, 1897.)



parent knows; yet how few put them in practice! How beautiful to "honour thy father and thy mother," yet how difficult if they have marred our lives by the mismanagement of our early education! And even, to take a common case, when fathers immersed in business or pleasure, or mothers devoted to society and fashion, hand over their children entirely to the care of nurses and teachers, do they not neglect a fundamental duty in depriving them of the opportunity of loving and honouring them, and of thus learning what no nurse or teacher can ever impart? Who does not know the yearning of young children for sympathy and affection? Surely it is the sacred duty and privilege of parents to satisfy it. We must not stop to discuss the details of a sound primary education, but we cannot insist too strongly that love, duty, and method are its mainsprings, and that its foremost aims should be to teach obedience and patience, consideration for others, kindness to dumb animals, and general unselfishness. Upon such foundations there will be no serious difficulty in rearing the edifice of Secondary Education.

Before considering the aims of Secondary Education, let us bear in mind that its methods are somewhat different from those of the primary stage. The boy is now more or less severed from home, he begins to be more wilful, masterful, and independent, and he therefore requires to be subjected to stricter discipline. Discipline, though with a strong and constant undercurrent of sympathy and affection, may be called the keynote of the secondary period, as tender patience is that of the primary; for coaxing and caresses we now require to substitute, metaphorically at least, the rod and the tawse. In other words, this is the period when the great majority of boys require a certain amount of systematic and judicious coercion in order to fit them for the battle of life. Grown-up people find it difficult enough to practise habits of self-discipline. It is therefore of vital importance to teach boys such habits during the plastic age; and it is as fatal an error to keep them in leading-strings, like mere children, as it is to leave them too much to their own devices. There are doubtless exceptional cases which demand exceptional treatment; but we are mainly concerned with boys of normal capacity, as it is impossible to legislate either for geniuses or

dunces. Nor can we take account of boys who are destined for some trade or handicraft, and who are rarely in a position to obtain the benefits of Secondary Education.

At the outset arises the question—Have you discovered any natural aptitude or talent in the boy, apart of course from any mere passing fancy? If so, do not thwart it, or throw cold water upon it, as parents sometimes do, but welcome it as a God-sent gift to be encouraged and fostered, yet always with due regard to method and discipline. For, be the taste or talent what it may, it must not interfere with the boy's general education.

What then is the chief aim of general education? Fond and ambitious parents reply, "I want my son to be a thorough gentleman and to get into the best society." Poor or practical parents reply, "My son must learn how to earn his living." Pious parents want their sons to be nurtured in sound religious principle. Such aims are very natural, but they are of secondary importance. The one true, prime object of general education is to convert the boy into a good citizen, into a man with all his mental, moral, and physical powers harmoniously developed. Aim at nothing lower than this lofty ideal. Seek ye first to do the duty imposed on you by nature and by the God of nature, and "all these things shall be added unto you"! Let no special aim, no hobby or fad interfere with it. Let there be no wavering, no chopping and changing, no shirking of this sacred duty.

This naturally leads us to the vital question as to the choice of a school. Alas, how grievously do many parents err in this matter! Instead of founding their educational scheme upon the rock of sound principle, do they not often found it upon the quicksands just alluded to? One father chooses a school for his son because it is aristocratic, another because its head-master is pious, a third because it is well endowed with scholarships, a fourth because it turns out a great many "successes" for the civil or the military service. A choice actuated by such motives is not only wrong in principle, but is very apt to disappoint: the aristocratic boys are found to be made of common clay, the pious master cannot teach, the scholarships and the successes are often hopelessly beyond reach. The boy is then probably shifted about from one school to another, with the result that his education is a



failure. Surely the paramount questions should always be—Where are the best, the most skilful and thorough teaching, and the most conscientious care and supervision to be obtained consistently with our means? Other considerations are not to be entirely disregarded, but some of them are apt to be sordid, and all are secondary.

When the school has been chosen, what is the boy to learn there? This question confronts us with the modern conflict between the old humanistic, or grammar and classical schools, on the one hand, and the new realistic, or commercial and technical schools, on the other. To discuss their respective merits fully would lead us too far afield. While neither has an absolute monopoly of the truth, it is the unanimous opinion of the best educationists that the study of language and literature, and above all, the boy's own language and literature, is the most educative of all studies. It teaches him not only to speak and to write well, but to think accurately and to act reasonably. His horizon becomes ever wider, and, as a natural consequence, it soon embraces the geography and history of his own and of other countries. In fact, English literature, and history, and geography in the widest sense of the word, would almost alone equip him for honourable citizenship, for they make him observant, ready, alert, and sympathetic. But these studies naturally lead to others. You cannot understand the English language, literature, and history thoroughly without knowing something of Latin and of French, nor can you study geography in the proper sense without some help from mathematics and physics. So that Latin, French, mathematics, and physics are indispensable additions to the English with which we set out. Other languages, other sciences, and philosophy may follow at a later stage. The boy's natural aptitudes will probably decide whether he should take up such additional subjects at school or at college, or perhaps dispense with them altogether.

Thus far we have been considering education almost solely from the general or ethical standpoint. The object of all true education is mainly ethical, as my friend and colleague, Professor Laurie, has so often and eloquently pointed out. But most parents are impatient to begin the practical education of their sons, and are anxious to know when it

may be safely entered upon. Let them remember, in the first place, that the best general, ethical education is also, in the long run, the most practical, as it best fits the boy to become a wise and capable citizen. And, secondly, if they are observant and watchful, they will usually find that two or three years of good secondary education naturally lead to the portals of various pursuits and careers, to one or other of which the boy's own inclinations attract him. If, for example, he has a taste for the India Civil Service, let him devote himself largely to history; if he has a bent for engineering, let him make a special study of mathematics; if he aspires to university honours, let him follow his classical or other particular bent; if he is to be a merchant, let him cultivate geography, book-keeping, and modern languages. But let all this specialising be kept in strict and constant subordination to his general studies. In other words, if he is to be soundly educated, the practical trend of his studies must always be subsidiary to the ethical. Educate him for manhood and citizenship first, and for a profession afterwards. For four or five years in all, his Secondary Education should be mainly general, but during the last two or three of these a few special subjects may be gradually superadded.

Having tried to define the supreme aims of secondary education, let me say a word as to its methods. One rule in particular I would venture to lay down as one of vital importance. No boy should be obliged to learn anything by heart until he really understands it, unless it be some mere mechanical list of words or sequence of figures. I assume, of course, that he has learned the parts of speech, the multiplication-table, a few rules, and various every-day statistics during his primary education. I assume that he is better equipped before entering upon his secondary stage than an Eton boy I once knew, who had been seven or eight years at Eton without knowing the multiplication-table. But while, as a matter of necessary drill and discipline, certain things require to be learned by heart, let it never be forgotten that what a boy's mental and moral nature chiefly wants is nourishment. Too much drill and too little food will never make a good soldier or a good athlete.

And is it not an old-fashioned error to suppose that certain dead languages are more educative than the living? To



Latin, for instance, six, eight, or more hours weekly are usually given, but to French or German two or three only. I would respectfully suggest their being placed on an equal footing; first, because a living language is more likely to interest the boy, and to teach him to think and act intelligently; secondly, because there is so much more to be learned—pronunciation, conversation, letter-writing, besides a more extensive literature; thirdly, because it is more useful, embracing not merely obscure and archaic histories, and strange tales of the loves and the quarrels of the Olympians, but a vast treasure of scientific and general knowledge. Why do most boys take such an inordinate time to learn Latin or Greek? Chiefly, I am convinced, because their hearts are not in it.

Let us now pass from programmes and methods to the question of choosing a profession. If the parents have been observant and vigilant, nature itself will generally come to their aid. She will generally indicate what the boy is fit for, what he can do well, what are his favourite pursuits; and if her counsel be followed, and the boy's career shaped accordingly, he is likely to become both a useful and a happy member of society. Few parents, however, study their children's characters as they ought, and even those who have done so are very apt to reject nature's wise counsels. And so they proceed to choose a profession for their sons upon totally different principles—it is lucrative, it is gentlemanlike, it will raise them in the social scale, there must be an officer and a parson in the family, and so forth. To choose a profession on such grounds is to choose it on a false principle. It is precisely like marrying for money or for rank. "But how dreadful it would be if our son should lose caste," is a complaint one often hears. Away with such snobbery! Educate your son as a man and as a gentleman, let him honestly do with all his might whatsoever his hand findeth to do, and he will be a gentleman to the end—a truer gentleman than those who "toil not, neither do they spin." By all means let him enter upon the highest kind of work he is fit for, but let him ever remember that no honest work is beneath his dignity or yours. In fact we should all remember that the learned professions, the civil and military services, art, science, and letters, which are apt to pride themselves on

their superiority to other vocations, are all more or less parasitical. For they are all dependent upon the agriculture, the industry, and the commerce which form the staff of life all the world over. These primary and fundamental pursuits are therefore highly important and honourable, and the more brains we contribute to them the better for the whole country.

And now that we have given our young friend a sound secondary education, prepared him for the battle of life, and chosen a profession for him, we have brought him to the threshold, either of some special and technical training, or of the university. In the former case we take leave of him for the present, and we wish him God-speed, confident that he will get on in the best sense of that expression. But if he is to enter on a university education, let us accompany him a little longer.

While in the primary stage of education the ruling principle should be gentle guidance, and in the secondary stage wholesome discipline, the principles of the university stage are liberty and self-discipline. But can the average student be entirely trusted to make a good use of his liberty, and to enter seriously on the task of self-discipline? Experience answers in the negative. How then can we still exercise some wholesome control over him? Is he to have absolute "*Lernfreiheit*"? Can we trust to the "*Lehrfreiheit*" of some of our universities to give him proper instruction? My own experience as a graduate of a German university is that "*Lernfreiheit*" too often means liberty to learn nothing, and that "*Lehrfreiheit*" means liberty to teach nothing. My experience at Cambridge has convinced me that a man's success there depends mainly on his obtaining good private tuition, as there is little or no organized public teaching. At Oxford the system is similar. In Edinburgh, on the other hand, at the largest of the four Scottish universities (whose system is practically identical), the student is offered public and systematic teaching in some fifty different subjects; and before he is admitted to the respective graduation examinations he *must* have attended a certain number of courses of lectures, passed the periodical examinations, written essays, taken part in laboratory work, etc. In arts and science more particularly he has a great variety of options, but having made his election he is then subjected to the strict discipline



just alluded to. While in Germany and in England private and irresponsible tuition—which too often means “cram”—is the rule, in Scotland it is happily the exception. Everyone knows, but it cannot be too often repeated, that “cram” may enable a man to pass an examination, but that, as soon as the examination is over, his mind presents as absolute a blank as that of the parrot which he resembles; whereas systematic training teaches him to know, think, and act like a rational human being. For all ordinary students, therefore, the Scottish, the American, the Italian, and various other universities, which demand a systematic training as a pre-requisite for graduation, are preferable to the English, the German, the French, and others which admit candidates to their graduation examinations without any such condition.

To sum up—the highest educational authorities are agreed that a liberal general education (yet not so wide as to produce mere smatterers), the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake, is the master-key to every professional portal, and to success in every possible career or pursuit in life. Who does not remember the oft-quoted words of Bacon? “Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man. . . . Histories make men wise. . . . Knowledge is power.” And what says the Bible? “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. . . . Therefore get wisdom. . . . Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

## “THE BOY JESUS.”\*

BY THE REV. H. S. SWITHINBANK.

LET us start by affirming the downright human life of Him who wrought with human hands the creed of creeds. To me the whole thing goes, if our Saviour is to be less human than the child whom St. Luke described as “advancing in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men.” We know growth when we see it, and St. Luke says He grew. “Progressive manifestation,” as some would put it, is not the word growth writ large: it is something else,—something more applicable to the hero of the Apocryphal gospels, or the Christ of a stained glass window, with no true human substance or environment, and no perspective.

One great debt we owe to the Revisers of 1881,—they restored to us the word “boy”: nowhere does it occur through the whole New Testament in King James’ Bible. Jacob and Esau were allowed to be boys, no one else: certainly not He of Whom we now read “the *Boy* Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem and His parents knew it not.”

Think of an English schoolboy, that unique product of our complex life. One has felt, in talking to schoolboys, how very far are their ideas and ideals from the girlish form in Eastern garb that pictures have made familiar: between “the Holy Child” as we have learnt to see Him, and the English boy as we know him, the distance is enormous: the need of a middle term is forced upon one. And we find it here—“the Boy Jesus.” I do not wonder that the old translators avoided the expression, with their notions of reverence: they knew English boy-life as parents, as schoolmasters, as once boys themselves. But we have it now: Jesus was a boy, a real boy; not a Jewish boy merely, but (for He was Son of Man: beneath the oriental clothing of His thought and life there is nothing provincial)—but a truly human boy.

\* Read before the Dulwich Branch of the P.N.E.U.